



Going to School

Success Stories in Education
Reform in Pakistan

Pakistan Education Initiative
A Partner of The Asia Foundation and U.S. Agency for International Development



The Asia Foundation

A Partner in Asia Since 1954

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Contents

Introduction	02
AlFalah Development Organization	04
Alif Laila Book Bus Society	06
Alliance for Quality Education Program	09
Baahnh Beli	11
Book Group	14
Bright Education Society	16
Faran Education Society	19
Khwendo Kor	22
Kubar Welfare Association and Youth Social Welfare Association	25
Orangi Pilot Project	27
Pakistan Institute for Environment Development Action Research	29
Society for the Advancement of Education	32
Strengthening Participatory Organizations	35
The Sustainable Development Policy Institute	37
Teacher's Resource Centre	40

Introduction

The past decade has seen a revolution in the education sector in Pakistan. At the onset of the 1990s, communities resisted girls education, but by the end of the decade Pakistan had witnessed an explosion of demand-driven, non-state private schools all over the country. When The Asia Foundation (TAF), started the Pakistan NGO Initiative (PNI) Program (PNI) in 1995 with funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), education was still not the priority of most communities. It was a time when a failed state system was held responsible for low literacy levels and the absence of quality in public schools. It was also a decade of acceptance of such problems as teacher absenteeism, “ghost schools,” and lack of political will.

In an environment riddled with challenges, TAF initiated its Education Program. The Education Program under PNI focused on making inroads into marginalized and backward communities through committed non-governmental organizations (NGOs). TAF kept its focus on primary education, particularly for girls, and the issues of quality, access, replicability, policy dialogue, and impact.

For the first three years of the program, numerous obstacles were encountered at every turn. When the girls would not come to school due to their workload at home or when it was too hot to sit outside in the sun, the task of cultivating reform seemed endless. It was an even greater challenge to get the parents and other family members involved. As one grandfather in Tharparker explained, “The sun is the same and the soil is the same for us, so why should we do something different like getting our girls educated?.” Over time, communities became used to and comfortable with our programs. Requests came from even very

conservative areas, such as Southern Punjab, to let boys sit in girls' schools supported by TAF.

Through our Pakistan NGO partners we were provided with a network of linkages to the grassroots to understand more completely and respond to the actual problems of the education sector. Building on this knowledge the Foundation supported an extensive research study on the political economy of education, which provided a key avenue to engage with the public sector. Our experience and understanding were welcomed and TAF became a resource for developing the National Plan of Action on Education, compiled by the Federal Ministry of Education. In the sixth year of PNI, TAF has become a resource for developing public-private partnerships and building the capacity of local education managers.

But it is not The Asia Foundation, rather the commitment of our PNI partners, whose work you will read about in this compilation of success stories, that has made a difference in opening doors for Pakistan's education reforms. The partnerships and the networks formed under PNI have contributed and will continue to contribute for a prosperous future of Pakistan.

We hope you enjoy *Going to School* and welcome your feedback and suggestions.

Mehnaz Akber Aziz
Education Specialist
The Asia Foundation
April 2002

Alfalah Development Organization *Dhok Hassu Teacher's Resource Center*

The Asia Foundation, in cooperation with the Alfalah Development Organization, is supporting the establishment of the Teacher's Resource Center in the Dhok Hassu residential district of Rawalpindi in February 2002. A community of tightly-built houses and a dense population, Dhok



US Ambassador
Wendy Chamberlin
inaugurating
Teacher's Resource
Center, Dhok Hassu

Hassu faces a severe deprivation of quality educational institutions for its children. TAF and Alfalah agreed on this cooperative

program as a key pilot project for public-private partnership in education reform. Based on the project's quick progress, the community-led Resource Center now serves as a model program for similar planned projects in surrounding areas.

The TAF / Alfalah

partnership allows for coordination between the public and private education sectors and empowers the participating schools to engage with local government leaders. Teachers affiliated with both government and non-government schools are able to join a unique, integrated training program to broaden their skills. The training curricula helps build education values, and introduces concepts such as equality and gender in education; social-educational leadership development; school management, organization and growth; and making the transition to higher education

Twenty teachers from 10 private schools and 10 teachers from adjoining government schools are currently receiving ongoing training. Information and training kits are also available to the general community for those who are considering careers in teaching. In addition, the Resource Center aids education providers in assessing

and improving their performances. Locally elected Union Council Members are encouraged to receive information on the details and achievements of the teacher-training program and its constituents. To ensure continued growth and assessment of the program, monthly meetings of selected school representatives are held at the Resource Center.

With this new project, TAF and Alfalah hope to achieve coordination among government and non-government schools in Dhok Hassu, to raise education standards, to provide clean and friendly school environments, and to strengthen school management. The communities involved have reported improvements in several areas since the onset of the TAF/Alfalah initiative, including introduction of a broader range of teaching materials and methods available to teachers. Ultimately, the project hopes to create an environment in which the schools,

locally elected officials, and the education officers of the government would be capable of sustaining the improved school conditions after the completion of the partnership project. Plans to create 11 additional Resource Centers in neighboring areas are underway, with a goal of wide-scale replication over the long-term.



US Ambassador
meeting with lady councillors



Alif Laila Book Bus Society *A Children's Lending Library*

"It is essential for children to have a relationship with books. Books help young minds to form opinions, develop ideas, and learn about a

a quarter of a century ago. It is a testament to her single-minded determination and commitment that Alif Laila remains a strong and active resource center for children.

The Society began in 1978 when Basarat formed a children's lending library in an engineless double-decker bus stationed at the edge of a park in Gulberg, Lahore. The bus was converted into a library, with numerous bookshelves and comfortable seating. The walls were painted with bright murals, and through the day, sun streams through the windows. As most children of underprivileged backgrounds don't have buying power, a lending library seemed a workable solution, and a way in which to expand their horizons and expose them to ideas they would not normally have had access to.

Basarat Kazmi had witnessed the dismal state of governmental schooling, which she describes as "Dickensian." She describes their methodologies as didactic, and states that they employ archaic principles



larger world." It was with this attitude that Basarat Kazmi formed the Alif Laila Book Bus Society nearly

such as rote learning, and the punishment cane. Because government schools have little or no extra-curricular activities, she approached various principals of schools in the vicinity to send their pupils and encourage them to become members of the society.

In a two-pronged partnership, with the Pakistan NGO Initiative lending institutional strengthening and

programmatic support, Alif Laila successfully administered eight individual hobby clubs from a separate resource center. Numerous children from government schools were given access, some for the first time, to instruction in computers, electronics, mechanics, photography, arts, crafts, aero-modelling, and carpentry. Children from six different girls' schools had the opportunity of visiting the resource center weekly for an hour at a time. "One hour might not seem like a long enough time, but it opens doors and shows these children things they haven't seen before," says an instructor. Even many private schools today don't offer such a rich array of

extracurricular activities.

Last year alone there were 19,000 recorded visits to the Alif Laila Book Bus Society. The Government

of the Punjab has verified that Alif Laila records a higher membership than the Punjab Public Library.

"We had a very satisfying relationship with TAF funding the running of the hobby clubs, says Basarat. Under the guidance of TAF,

"Since childhood I have wanted to do away with the disparity between the haves and the have-nots of this country. I have always felt that one must try to create a better tomorrow for our country's children. My idea was to involve underprivileged children. Local government schools are appalling and my heart goes out to these children. I wanted to create an impact on their lives. I wanted to offer them something better, something to have hope for."
- Basarat Kazmi, Alif Laila Book Bus Society

Alif Laila published policy papers on resource centers, fund raising, universal education, and wrote a strategic plan for their future. Through publications, kits and crafts, Alif Laila can look forward to a future that is self-sustaining. "With periodic help, Alif Laila has sustained itself as a serious organization."

Today the Alif Laila Book Bus Society has grown considerably. They host extensive activities like puppet shows and sporting events in the adjacent park. They have a building in the park that is a reference library equipped with audio visual equipment, as well as a vast video library of educational and nature documentaries. Alif Laila owns a bus

that ferries the children back and forth from school to the resource center or library. In addition, Alif Laila has run non-formal schools in Lahore's squatter colonies. "We believe that all the children in Pakistan deserve the best that we can give them." Although she has no formal training, Basarat Kazmi has developed a deep understanding of education. This knowledge coupled with an unflagging commitment to the cause of education has made Alif Laila endure. "Alif Laila is like a religion for me," she says.

Alif Laila has a vibrant publications department where they create books and activity-based learning aids for teachers and students. "Much of the national curriculum is outdated. Often the teachers themselves do not understand concepts. We have produced books and kits on mathematics and science. Through our materials we hope to go where Alif Laila cannot physically go."

As a new initiative, Alif Laila approached five government schools with unutilized classrooms. They have now established bright, interactive, child-friendly preschool classes within these government schools. It is a model they hope to replicate, just as they hope to replicate the Alif Laila Book Bus and resource center through all the

provinces of Pakistan.

"Only in a happy place can children grow well and make their education worthwhile."

Alliance for Quality Education Program

Growth through Cooperation in the Education of Pakistan's Youth

With the approach of "growth through cooperation" in the education of Pakistan's youth, TAF is collaborating with Alliance for Quality Education under the Pakistan NGO Initiative (PNI) to provide the best schooling possible to the poorest of the population in. A network of three groups was established in February 2002 to ensure standardization and opportunity for experience-sharing for participating schools from the public and private sectors.

Due to the Government's failure to supply quality education to the people of Pakistan, multiple education providers now exist and as many as 30% of students attend private schools. While the schools provide an alternative, they remain external to school standardization processes needed for quality education. Furthermore, linkage with training institutions remains weak for the majority of private schools. In response, the Alliance program was brokered to strengthen the capacity of private institutions and

to assist in public-private partnerships as well. The members



Quality
enhancement

include constituent schools from the Kashmir Education Trust Project, the Sufi Foundation Project, the Mianwali Education Trust Project, and AGAHI (a CIDA Funded Project).

In addition to TAF support to the reform of curriculum planning, teacher and student evaluation, student testing, teacher training, and coordination with external organizations, the Alliance employs

a coordinator to oversee and administer the process. The schools vary in student numbers and are increasingly incorporating larger



Agahi school teachers at completion of a course

female percentages into their populations. For example, the Mianwali Project's school (Tameer-e-Millat Secondary High School) houses 29 teachers and 420 students; estimates claim the school is likely to have 700 students and will need over forty teachers by 2005. The need for collaboration towards the elevation of standards in schools is imperative as student populations in private schools increase in Pakistan, as the TAF/Alliance project is demonstrating a path for enhancing quality across the wide spectrum of Pakistani schools.



Science class at Pearl Valley School, Rawlakot

Baahnh Beli

Integrated Programs for the Marginalized

Tharparkar, a vast desert in the interior of Sindh, is possibly one of the most remote, backward, and undeveloped regions in the country. A modern day anachronism, it is a place where time has stood still for centuries, where no roads, airlines or trains have accessed this frontier of Pakistan. Arid and agriculturally barren, the indigenous people eke out a meager subsistence, barely surviving from season to season but unable to better their living standards.

A core group of concerned urban-based professionals and social activists, led by Javed Jabbar, formed during the severe drought of 1985. Their initial mandate was merely to give the people of Tharparkar a voice in the media, and to alert the rest of the country to the drought and imminent starvation facing the locals. "Tharparkar desert was beyond the mainstream of development consciousness. It was a very neglected part of the country," says Javed Jabbar. Initially the group of concerned citizens would meet to

discuss the immediate needs of the people of Tharparkar and try to arrange relief. They had no donors or project support, but would work together to raise funds for minor projects such as repairing wells. The meetings were informal but highly interactive, and a great learning



experience for what was to follow later.

Baahnh Beli, the pioneering NGO in Tharparkar desert was formally registered in 1987. Baahnh Beli is a Seraiki language phrase meaning "to hold hands in

A non-formal
School in
Tharparkar

friendship." The locals of Tharparkar were asked to choose a name to ensure a sense of community participation and ownership in the future projects conducted by Baahnh Beli. Once Baahnh Beli was registered, the need to formalize their approach arose. Baahnh Beli decided to focus on the sectors of female education, health, micro credit, livestock maintenance, and

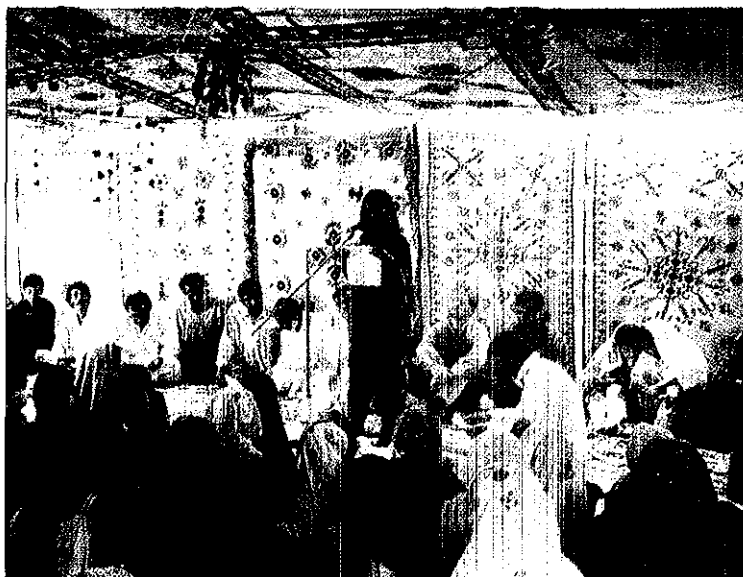
"Our relationship with The Asia Foundation began during the Pakistan NGO Initiative in early 1997. TAF visited Baahnh Beli and asked us to evolve a formal project for girls' schools as part of the Pakistan NGO initiative. TAF took the initiative of contacting us. They took an understanding view of our needs and became very constructive collaborators in the process. TAF has enabled us to start institutionalizing what we had done up until then on an informal and spontaneous basis."

- Javed Jabbar, Baahnh Beli

for some, these have been the first operational girls' schools ever. Jabbar says, "There was a need for a new kind of organization: a rural-urban bridge of friendship and cooperation. Huge distances had to be bridged in terms of geography, ethnicity, income levels, language, and infrastructure. In the larger political environment there was an attempt to polarize rural and urban Sindh, and we wanted to put into play a binding and healing process."

Participatory development had not yet gained currency, but the evolution of Baahnh Beli and its approach has been entirely derived from field experience, with the concept of female education as its pivot. There has always been a high degree of village participation in all of Baahnh Beli's projects.

Through their relationship with TAF, Baahnh Beli developed a partnership with fellow educational NGO, SAHE. Using indigenous and locally relevant material and symbols, SAHE developed a special curriculum in the local language for non-formal primary education in



efficient irrigation. Among their other initiatives, dozens of girls' schools have been set up through some of the most remote areas of Tharparkar:

Tharparkar. Although education was given the top-most priority, there were concerns over how the initial

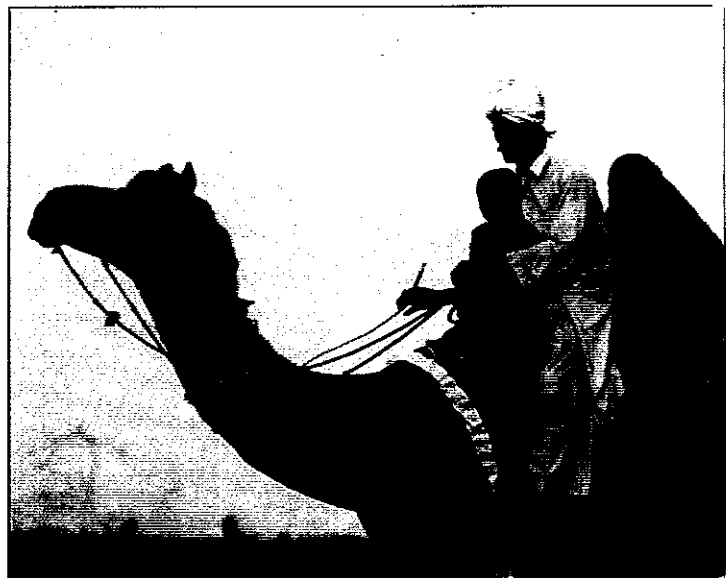


only arid and hostile, but also subject to unpredictable events such as earthquakes, climatic hazards, and financial problems. If attempts at education can be successful there, other educational initiatives elsewhere have every reason to also be successful.

30 schools would fare during times of adversity. Despite famine and drought, there are now 39 schools. Not only was this an increase in the number of schools, but two of the schools were upgraded from primary to secondary.

The Sindh Department of Education has now formally recognized Baahn Beli's non-formal girls' schools. As such, students of Baahn Beli schools are permitted to take government-certified exams, and they can look forward to higher education.

There is a thirst for education as the plains of Tharparkar are not



Going to School

The Book Group

Striving to Reform Pakistan's Education System

The Book Group (BG) brings together a group of concerned educationists striving to reform Pakistan's education system. BG is committed to producing high quality texts, developing curriculum alternatives and supplementary teaching material, and improving the skills of teachers. Drawing on the lessons learned in practical approach

began working in a select number of schools to redefine the objectives of education, restructuring the curricula to meet these objectives, developing alternative textbooks, and make teaching more innovative and child-centered. To date, BG has developed and printed 52 supplementary alternative textbooks used in 37 participating schools. In addition, an



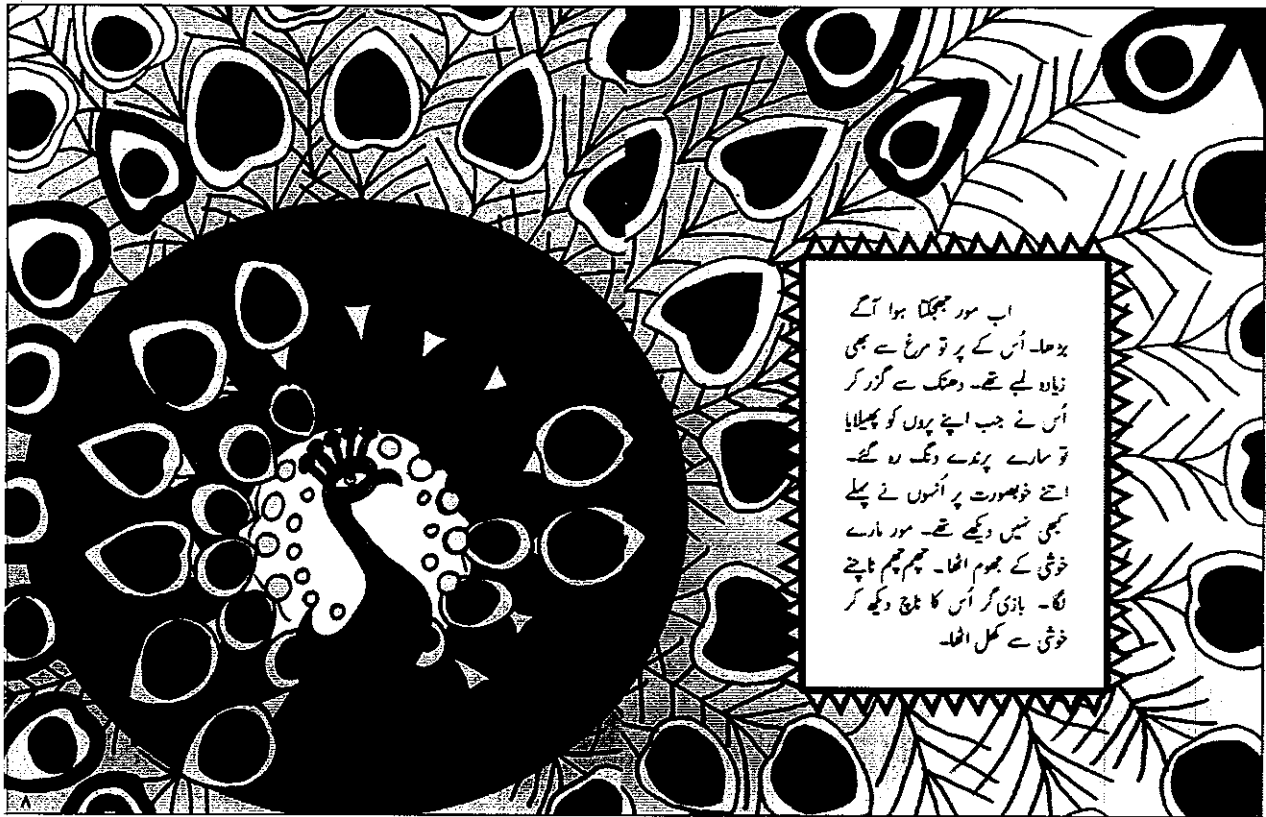
integrated curriculum for classes I and II (in English) has been developed in collaboration with 11 of these schools. BG took over the management of one government school in 1995, a successful pilot program exemplifying public-private cooperation. In association with 18 other schools in Karachi, BG has initiated the establishment of an independent Examination Board as well.

to reform, BG further provides concrete inputs into the policy making process.

Formed in October 1988, BG

As part of their ongoing efforts, BG has collaborated with TAF to develop two alternative textbooks with accompanying teacher's guides, and

initiated training and development programs initially involving six low-income schools in Karachi. These books and guides aim to make education relevant and functional by drawing directly on the culture and environment of the learners and the communities they live in. The materials help advance creative learning skills, develop vocabularies, and enhance confidence among children as to express themselves and ask questions.



earning made fun

Bright Education Society *The Naunehal Academy*

Since 1996 the Bright Education Society (BES) has been a thriving and integral part of Islamia Colony,



before...
starting
up on
roof-top

Qasbah, on the hilly fringes of Orangi town, an urban slum with over 1.5 million people and a surprising literacy rate of 70%. Run by three enthusiastic and committed young men, BES has expanded its initial mandate to extend beyond the prime focus of education, and now BES also addresses such core issues as preventive and public health, sanitation, and micro credit.

BES is a testament to the successes of social mobilization when members of a community pull together to effect social change and uplift their own conditions and environment. With The Asia Foundation's initial and continued support, Waheed Khan, Faqeer Mohammed and Syed Latif have created a sustainable and growing enterprise for change and development within their community.

In 1994, these three teenaged residents of Islamia Colony were recruited by Orangi Pilot Project (OPP) to help conduct a survey of their area, and their findings were grim. Sanitation and literacy were identified as the direst problems in certain pockets of Islamia Colony. The local government had provided little or no provision for civic facilities, and the literacy rate was found to be a dismal 2% among this poor and disenfranchised migrant community, predominantly from the North West Frontier Province (NWFP). Propelled into taking action

by OPP, the three rallied together, and under OPP guidance and training, helped to mobilize the community while participating in laying sanitation lines in the streets of Islamia Colony. Having completed this task efficiently, each decided independently to work in the field of education since

"Initially there was a very poor female enrollment rate. We went to the community elders urging them to send their daughters to school, but it wasn't until we enrolled our own sisters and nieces, and hired a female teacher, that others started to feel encouraged and followed suit. As an incentive we also offered the girl students free books."

-Waheed Khan, BES

there existed only one functional government primary school serving a population of 80,000 residents. They recognized that without access to education, there was little hope for residents of Islamia Colony to break the cycle of poverty.

Waheed obtained a grant of Rs.1,300 to establish a home school on his own premises, while Faeer and Latif started a coaching centre. Unfortunately, both of these initiatives faced difficulty in the first year. For example, neither took tuition fees from their students, which rendered them unsustainable.

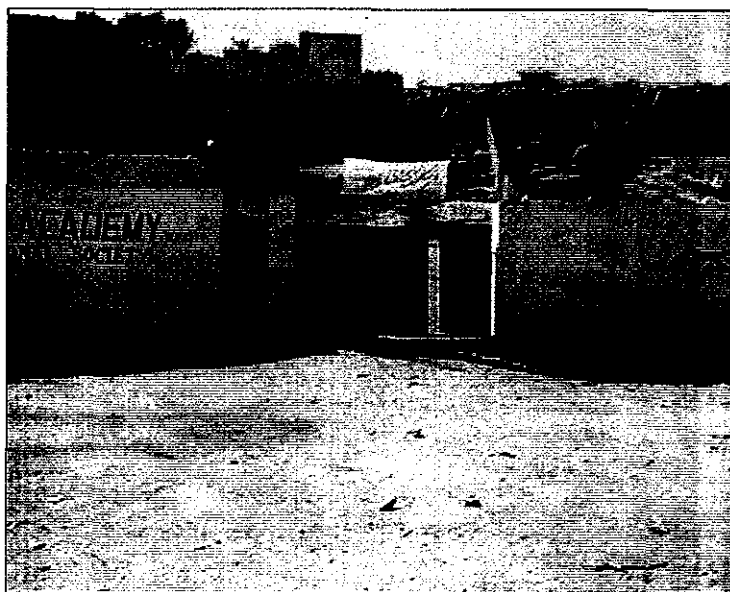
Having learned valuable lessons through experience, the three friends joined hands a year later, in 1995, and established a new platform under the banner of the Bright Education Society. Through the Pakistan NGO Initiative's support of the Educational Entrepreneurs

Program, BES was formally registered in 1996. "TAF provided

the teachers' salaries. They gave us direction and on the job training of accounting and structure planning. Without their initial support, Bright Education Society might not have survived despite our best efforts and

intentions," says Waheed.

The combined efforts of



Waheed, Faeer and Latif led to the opening of the Naunehal Academy, a formal school. In addition, the group held a series of meetings within the community to establish a sense of ownership. Through these meetings it was decided that the

...after,
a full
institution

Naunehal Academy would have to charge a nominal fee with the goals of being a viable initiative. In addition, they also established "a book bank" that would lend books to the students at an affordable annual rate.

Despite opposition from the conservative elements in their community, they were able to raise the level of female enrollment considerably.

The Naunehal Academy has grown dramatically since its early



days. The school had to change premises five times before the Sindh Katchi Abadi Authority (SKAA) allocated them land for a school. The local landlords embroiled them in a lengthy land dispute, which was finally settled in their favor. Room by room the school has grown and it now boasts 8 rooms around a sunny courtyard. Today the Academy has a student enrollment

of 250. Including Waheed, Fageer and Latif, there are twelve teachers, five of whom are female. The teachers' education levels range from Intermediate graduates to Masters graduates. Waheed, Fageer, and Latif work voluntarily and save their salaries in a common pool which is used as funding for school improvements. With funds raised from other partners including Citibank, Old Kinnaird Student's Association, and Academy for Education Development, BES has recently purchased a computer for the Academy and has included a computer-training course.

Since 1997, BES has established six home-based schools for girls in the informal education sector. These home-based schools have been especially welcomed by the families of children who work for a living, because of their flexible timetables. Brimming with ideas for the future, Waheed, Fageer, and Latif exchange ideas about English language coaching Centres, computer schools, and the Naunehal Academy 2, which is currently being built in Clifton's *katchi abadi* or slum area.

Waheed, Fageer, and Latif are now in their early twenties. Although experience has tempered and taught them practical realities, they retain the optimism and vigour of youth, and the light of idealism remains undimmed in their minds.

Faran Education Society

A Model School System Synonymous with Success

The Faran Education Society has become a model school system synonymous with success. Mention FES in any educational forum nationwide and its endeavours are applauded. With a network of over 800 partner schools, educating over 120,000 students today, FES has grown in quantum leaps since its inception.

Although FES was formally registered in 1978, the seeds of the initiative were planted in 1975. With the help of a group of motivated and dedicated teachers, Reaz Ahmed, a mathematician, spearheaded an active community mobilization campaign and formed a community based organization as well as created his first pilot school. Reaz Ahmed belongs to a community of Bihari migrants who came to Pakistan in 1971. Despite extreme hardships, the community focused on educating their offspring. Their schools adopted the slogan "Charity negates development. Education leads to development." It was with this firm principle in mind that Reaz designed

a self-sustaining, fee-taking school, depending on the strengths of the community, and without turning to



Education workshop
under TAF Funding

donors for support.

Donor support was nowhere in sight for the first few years. "We wanted to be self-sustaining, and we realized that most donors have an agenda of their own. They also have a habit of putting too many objectives into a little budget. We didn't want to work with those pressures," says Reaz. However, having established its credentials,

the Faran Education Society developed an agreeable and productive relationship with The Asia Foundation under the Pakistan NGO Initiative.

Orangi, a sprawling urban slum, the largest in Asia, inhabited by well over one and a half million poor and disenfranchised migrants, is possibly the seat of the most deprived sector of society.

Unfortunately, in its early days Reaz Ahmed's pilot school was beset by

"TAF were frequent visitors of our program, even before funding began. During their PNI program they gave us management funding and kept us afloat. Without their support we certainly would not have been able to grow as effectively as we have. In fact, without their support, Faran Education Society may have collapsed."

-Reaz Ahmed, FES

building was subject to a deliberate arson attack and burned down. It is a testament to Reaz Ahmed's relentless commitment that despite all these disasters, the school never

stopped functioning. Teachers would have to improvise by taking lessons in the open air or under hastily erected tents. Twenty-five years later the Faran School still operates today.

Reaz Ahmed recognized the fact that for so many people, their children's education was the only ray of hope in their lives: "So many families were desperate to educate their children. They would sacrifice a meal, but not their children's education. We could not let them down."

Today, Faran Education Society's 800 partner schools with over 120,000 students in the private, public, and non-formal sectors, have access to FES libraries and computer laboratories.

As well as management funding, TAF has given directional guidance to FES and urged them to look into other earning avenues for self-sufficiency. FES has expanded its mandate to include teacher training, curriculum development,

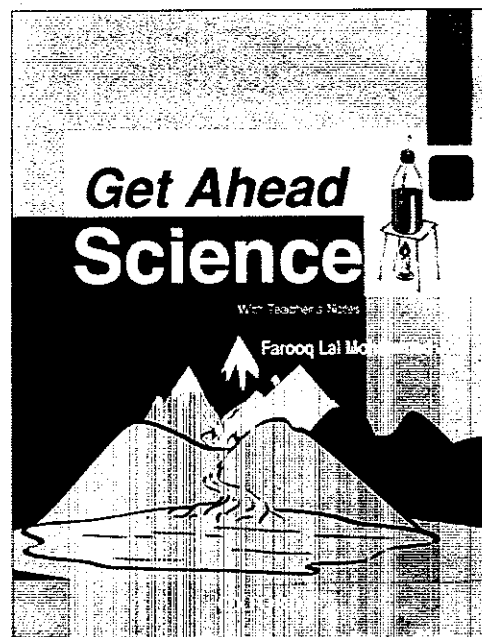
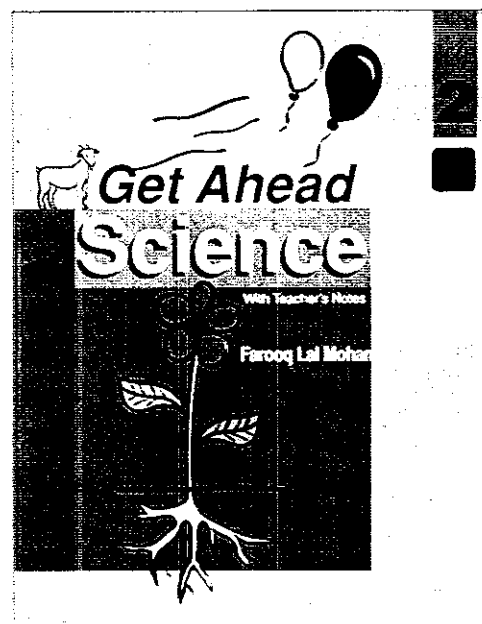


Maths Books
workshop

one disaster after another. They were initially evicted from rented premises, their school building was damaged in a storm, and finally the

and publications. FES staff has developed eight science books, and the Oxford University Press is publishing six mathematics textbooks for sale and general distribution. In keeping with the growing demands of the times, FES today runs an Institute of Computer Sciences for both adult learners and school-going children.

Almost in defiance of these huge battles that the Faran Education Society has had to fight, Orangi today has a literacy rate of over 70%. In the cluster area within which FES has its schools, the literacy rate is as high as 90%. Compared to the official national literacy rate, the success stories of educational initiatives in Orangi are models worth marveling over and learning from.



Books developed by
TAF support

Khwendo Kor *Bridging the Gap*

Khwendo Kor's mission targets women and children's development through education, health, and micro-finance. For Mariam Bibi, the pioneering spirit behind Khwendo Kor, these are not merely ideals, and she is familiar with

each of these three subjects well as they have affected her own life in a direct sense.

"When I began, I was not so clear about my agenda. I soon realized that women were asking for education and healthcare. Until these fundamental needs were met, the environment did not matter to them. What stoves they cooked on or what fuel they used meant nothing. We had not been working according to their needs; we had been imposing our own ideas."

- Mariam Bibi, Khwendo Kor

While she has battled against severe odds to make a place for herself in an extremely conservative society, Mariam Bibi

strives to improve the quality of life for countless other women and

children within the contexts of both family and society.

Khwendo Kor means "sisters' home" in Pushto, the primary language of NWFP. Established initially as an environmental NGO in 1993, Mariam Bibi changed focus to

women and children after some preliminary fieldwork. This insight led to the realization that the requirements of the community would be paramount. Without the cornerstone of education and basic healthcare, other important development issues could not be tackled. As part of the Pakistan NGO Initiative, a partnership between The Asia Foundation and Khwendo Kor developed to support Khwendo Kor's three goals: women's development, education and micro finance. In Bibi's own words, "The Asia Foundation has been sensitive



to our needs and are very supportive partners."

Khwendo Kor's partnership with The Asia Foundation began in 1996. They had established thirty schools in Malakand and another thirty in Karak when their funding from another donor agency came to an abrupt end due to policy changes.

With renewed conviction about its role and with the on-going support of their partner TAF, Khwendo Kor works in remote areas of the Frontier, and as of now has established over 100 schools in the four districts of Dir, Malakand, Karak and Peshawar. Over 3000 students have been directly impacted by their non-formal educational initiatives. As well as primary schooling for girls, Khwendo Kor runs adult literacy programs. These include health education, traditional birth attendant training, and basic literacy. As a part of their micro-enterprise program, Khwendo Kor trains women in skills and management techniques before helping them establish fruitful linkages with banks and micro-finance institutes

In the districts within which Khwendo Kor works, preventive

healthcare has also been provided for mothers and children, and assistance with linkages to government-

sponsored basic health units and district health officers are also available should the need for curative measures arise. Khwendo Kor does not shy

from intervention within communities on issues of advocacy and awareness raising, and instead

"The Asia Foundation helped us to further clarify our role. They have been willing to share their experience with us, as well as giving us technical guidance. They have allowed us to grow and have always tried to understand of our particular needs and constraints."

-Mariam Bibi, Khwendo Kor



Community school in a government-defunct building

poses questions and facilitates the community to reach feasible and sustainable solutions to their own problems. Khwendo Kor is involved in advocacy work at all levels, and is an active member of various national forums. Providing technical

assistance and expanding management have been critical and integral in the partnership between TAF and Khwendo Kor.

After The Asia Foundation's evaluation of Khwendo Kor's work, they partnered again to initiate the Khujwand Project. Meaning "better life," Khujwand was designed as an integrated project combining education, capacity

building for women, preventive

with The Asia Foundation.

Mariam Bibi has received

numerous awards for her work, most notably the United Nations Award for Women's Development. The Government of Pakistan has awarded her the prestigious Sitara Imtiaz. However, rather than reveling in her glory, Bibi is self-effacing but strong and dynamic, and focuses her energies on

Khwendo Kor and the role she plays steering its course.

"Our vision is clear. Empowerment of women has to be sensitive and contextual. We have to build a gradual rapport and trust within the community. We want to reach our objectives without causing an imbalance in the communities we work within."

"Khwendo Kor has been able to prove that if communities are mobilized properly and parents are involved in the educational process of their children, then educational initiatives for girls can be successful, even in the most remote and conservative areas."

- Mariam Bibi, Khwendo Kor



health care and micro-finance. Khujwand 1 and 2 have been successful and continuous programs

Kubar Welfare Association and Youth Social Welfare Association

Replicating and Scaling CBO's experiences

The Asia Foundation supported CBOs, the Kubar Welfare Association (KWA) and the Youth Social Welfare Association (YSWA) to implement a pilot project to pre-test two community-based schools in rural communities in Khairpur Sindh. Kubar Welfare Association (KWA) and Youth Social Welfare Association ran the two schools in rural communities of Khairpur Sindh. Sadiqa Salahuddun, then Director of The NGO Resource Centre facilitated the link of the CBOs to the Foundation.

The KWA was established in 1989 in the *Makran Khan Kubar* village when a few members of the Kubar youth decided to improve the living conditions of their community. Because there were no girls' schools in the village and a male teacher, who did not belong to Kubar, headed the only female school in a nearby village, very few girls were being educated. Recognizing this to be an obstacle in the process of development, the KWA decided to address the issue, and proceeded to

name 1995 as the *Year of Female Education*. The NGO Resource Centre (NGORC) provided training in basic teaching and school



management skills to 5 selected teachers for this project.

Bringing change
through teacher
training

YSWA was created in 1993 to improve the basic amenities in the Makran Khan Kubar. When asked why the need for such an organization was felt, one of the senior members of YSWA narrated an incident that described how, without a formal forum, it had

"There was a flaw at some level of the electricity supply system of the village, and in spite of repeated complaints, nothing was done about it. Eventually, after nine months without electricity, we [members of the YSWA] went directly to the khulli kutchehri [open court] of an influential government official, who instructed one of his staff to have the electricity supply renewed with 24 hours. The flaw was obviously so minimal that his orders were carried out. We realized then that it was only when we exerted ourselves as a group, and not while we had been making personal endeavors, that we were taken seriously."

- Sadiqa Salahuddin, NGO Resource Centre



become impossible to maintain even basic amenities.

Although there is a public girls' school including the middle school level present in the village,

levels of female literacy there remained low. Girls' attendance was low because the school was not centrally located, next to a busy highway and adjacent to the boys' school. The girls' teachers came irregularly, were often changed, and were disinterested in their pupils' development. Recognizing 1995 as the year of female education, YSWA launched a non-formal schooling plan, which began with the identification and motivation of two local young women as school teachers, followed by a door-to-door campaign to motivate families into sending their daughters to school. The school began functioning in August 1995 with a total of 98 students, divided into two classes.

Both CBOs in May 1996 received a grant from TAF towards the support of the girls' primary school. This experiment was scaled up under the World Bank-funded national Social Action Program by establishing 60 CBO run schools, which a local group called Naz Old Boys Welfare Association (NOWA) maintained. When the funding stopped in 1998, these schools were taken over by Development in Literacy (DIL) group, an expatriate Pakistani group in California. To this day the project is alive and running, serving as a model project for others to come.

Orangi Pilot Project

Supporting Entrepreneurial Models

Orangi is one of the largest urban slums in the Asian continent, with a population of over 1.5 million people and 700 schools. With an ever-burgeoning population of poor, disenfranchised migrants, education is critical to break the slum's vicious cycle of poverty. In 1980, the renowned social scientist Dr. Akhtar Hameed Khan established the Orangi Pilot Project (OPP). Working primarily in the fields of health, sanitation and education, OPP developed a Research and Training Institute (RTI) to assist grassroots NGOs and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) with their work. OPP operates on the principle of funding development while providing valuable social and technical guidance to encourage the mobilization of local resources and the practice of co-operative action at the local community level.

The objective of the collaborative initiative between The Asia Foundation and OPP RTI is the provision of quality non-formal education to people who have

limited or no access to the formal education system. Through this initiative, support has been extended to small yet functional and established non-formal private initiatives that need encouragement to grow. Educated youth of the area have been persuaded to create one-room, one-teacher schools in their own homes. As an initiative in educational entrepreneurship, the O P P / T A F partnership gives schools start-up grants, monitors their progress, and reduces the proportion of funding so the schools s t r e n g t h e n

themselves over time. OPP/TAF supports slow, incremental growth, monitors the direction in which these schools are heading, and encourages community independence with self-sustainability being the end goal. Of



A project
guided by
the late
Dr. Akhtar
Hameed Khan

the 67 schools initially supported, 42 have survived and are flourishing.

OPP meets monthly with each of these small schools to share knowledge and facilitate an osmosis of ideas. Anwar Rashid, Director of OPP

says: "There has always been a need for a forum for small level schools, both for the sharing of methods as well as for encouragement. TAF supported these initiatives during



English-medium entrepreneurial schools

their critical start-up phase. This is when schools and the teachers running them are at their most vulnerable and in need of recognition, acceptance and

confidence building. People need a token of recognition; it's a fact of human engineering."

Each start-up grant is enough to make some physical improvements to the schoolroom, such as basic furniture, a blackboard, or fans. However, not all the assistance required by schools is

"The way this project has been funded creates an environment which allows people to build faith in themselves and tap their inner resources. They solve their own problems. We are really only there to support them through the start up phase, monitor them, and give technical assistance or advice on direction. This program has the necessary dynamics and ingredients for healthy development."

-Anwar Rashid, OPP

financial. In addition to material goods, OPP also gives much-required teacher training for the educated youth that commit their time to improve the lives of children in their communities. Credit must go to these young

people for choosing to work towards the greater good.

By encouraging young educational entrepreneurs, OPP and TAF have developed a two-pronged approach. They not only work towards educating the youth of tomorrow, they also encourage and assist today's youth to develop a worthwhile and meaningful livelihood. In turn, these young people build on their pride and self-reliance, and the change impacts their communities as a whole.



Pakistan Institute for Environment Development Action Research *Step by Step to Sustainable Schools*

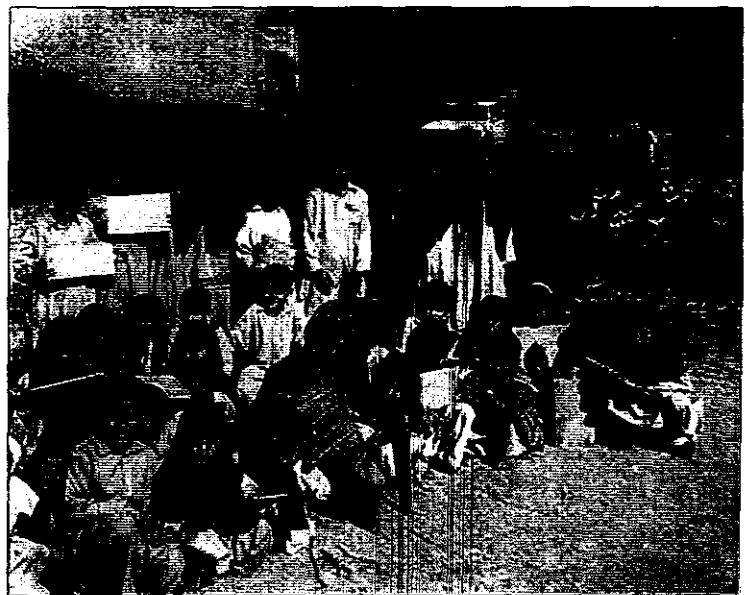
No single aspect of development can be viewed entirely in isolation. Any given field of development may intersect, overlap, and impact other seemingly unrelated fields, and can be reached through a multitude of different avenues. PIEDAR's involvement in education is a successful example of this.

PIEDAR is essentially an environmental NGO established in 1992 as an offspring of Pakistan's National Conservation Strategy. Led by Syed Ayub Qutub, a core group of policy makers joined together in order to put into practice, at the grassroots level, the nation's environmental agenda. "Making policies was one thing. Demonstrable implementation was quite another," says Ayub.

PIEDAR has representation in three provinces of Pakistan. It is involved in reversing environmental degradation through the conservation of lakes, training guides for eco-tourism, controlling the risk of pathogens by building sewers in densely populated urban slums, and

teaching communities to manage their irrigation systems in the most productive and sustainable way. 6,000 students of Urdu medium schools in the Punjab have had instruction on environmental management added to their syllabus.

Due to a successful long-term partnership with The Asia Foundation, which began in January 1997, PIEDAR has also run 40



primary home schools for rural children. These schools have 1,300 students, 80% of whom are female.

Although the initiative to form these schools was taken by PIEDAR, TAF now supports their program and operational costs.

"We have had a good relationship of balance with The Asia

Foundation. Their system of support is progressive and keeps the needs of the partner in mind, while also ensuring that we stick to our targets," says Ayub.

Believing in local autonomy and enterprise, these PIEDAR/TAF schools charge a nominal fee from their students. The schools are teacher-owned and supported by the local community. In order to ensure



breaking myths...

quality education, learning coordinators visit each school regularly and demonstrate the newest and most improved standards of primary education.

Through this experience PIEDAR and TAF are trying to establish a workable and successful model for primary schooling for rural girls, probably the most neglected sector of society. A heavily documented quarterly report is produced as an

action research initiative "to grade the investments, results, possibilities and impossibilities of these schools,"

Ayub says.

How did PIEDAR get involved in primary education for rural girls?

Much of PIEDAR's environmental involvement is at the grassroots level in rural areas. A couple of years after they had established themselves in various localities, the women of one area in Khanewal felt confident



enough to approach them. The women complained about feeling marginalized and requested for help to set up a home school for their girls. Beginning modestly, PIEDAR bought a blackboard and promised a monthly stipend to one such home school run by a young girl who had passed her matriculation. Through this experience, they then began asking about schooling for girls in all the areas that they worked in. "Although there were buildings for

schools in many areas, we noticed that most were non-functional. Teachers would just not attend." Within two years PIEDAR was running 20 such home schools for girls, with an astonishingly positive enrollment rate. Encouraged by this, Ayub claims, "If we can train village girls to deliver quality education, then even the poorest parents will send their daughters and pay a nominal fee."

With TAF support, today over 400 girls have passed the 5th Grade at these schools. Time will only tell what the impact and far reaching effects of education will have on this first generation of rural girls to have access to basic education. Ayub says, "PIEDAR entered a partnership with the Pakistan NGO Initiative because we and TAF both believed in institution building. These schools must be teacher owned, have local participation for a sense of community ownership, and must charge a fee. Neither we nor TAF agree to the idea of schools run as charity shops." Although it is a struggle to establish schools as independent, Ayub is confident that most of the larger schools will be financially self-sustaining after another few years. The smaller schools will certainly need support until they reach a certain level allowing self-sufficiency to be possible.

Ayub is optimistic in his philosophy about PIEDAR's involvement in education. Although it is not a field of expertise for him, he recognizes the contribution these PIEDAR/TAF schools have made to their local communities. "Primary schooling is the most basic and fundamental need in education. Extensive world development literature supports the idea that the value added of primary education is far greater than any subsequent education. It's like the first glass of water that quenches severe thirst.



After that first glass, each sip is fundamentally less important. Without that first glass, there is nothing."

Relevant learning

Society for the Advancement of Education

Developing Skills, Starting with Teachers

The SAHE-developed model of curriculum and teacher training encourages critical questioning, activity-based learning, playful creativity, and inquiry. "More than anything else we wish to instill



Using
Flash cards

curiosity, imagination and a love of learning in our students," says Dr. Fareeha Zafar, a pioneer and founding member of SAHE. Unlike traditional teaching methodologies that encourage rote learning, SAHE primarily develops reading, writing, and numerical skills in its non-formal primary based educational curriculum.

SAHE, the Society for the Advancement of Education, was founded by a group of volunteers and academics at the Punjab University in 1982. "We were concerned about the gaps in

education. There seemed to be no concern with the world perspective on current themes, so we ran courses for older students on issues such as colonialism, identity, and nationalism. However, we soon realized that we needed to direct our focus towards the mainstream: the Urdu medium deprived." Material in Urdu was hard to come by, so often it had to be developed or translated, and there was an added gender dimension that came into play, as parents did not allow their daughters to attend evening classes.

By the late 1980s, the founders of SAHE began to realize that in order to have far-reaching effects, the base of primary education had to be strengthened, especially for communities in rural and low-income areas. For these communities an English language-based curriculum offered a promise of upward mobility. During the past decade SAHE has had the diverse experience of working on curriculum development and teacher training for government, NGO, non-formal,

and private schools, as well as their own community-based schools. SAHE began strictly as a voluntary organization. By the mid-1990s they had to employ a core staff to continue and make the projects viable. Thus began SAHE's relationship with The Asia Foundation. "During the PNI initiative in early 1997 The Asia Foundation gave us institutional support for a long-term training program. It was a flexible grant and they helped us develop an overall strategy. Our quantum of work increased, and through TAF we formed a partnership with Baahnh Beli to develop locally relevant material for them in Sindhi language. We also worked towards forming a directory of networked educational NGOs. TAF was very responsive to our needs throughout."

Later in PNI, SAHE organized a conference on non-formal education. 300 representatives of NGOs and CBOs attended this conference. With the findings SAHE further focussed on developing an education watch program to identify innovative initiatives, the development of human rights and gender instructional material, and the training of teachers. "As we drew in more resources we were able to experiment, innovate, expand, and grow as an institution. TAF supported our training of teachers, community workers and managers of educational programs." Through

SAHE'S relationship with TAF, strong links have been formed with other educational NGOs such as Naz Old Boys Welfare Association (NOWA) and Baahnh Beli.

Running 40 schools for over a thousand students in eight districts of the Punjab, the typical SAHE classroom in a rural setting has colorful illustrations on the walls, posters on human rights education, gender issues, and the environment. Along with government prescribed textbooks, SAHE has developed innovative supplementary educational kits for each level in various subjects. The teaching is child-centered and activity-based, while the teachers are trained by SAHE for four days every alternate month. The program and students' results are regularly monitored and evaluated. Using multi-grade teaching methodologies, one teacher is able to take her students from grade 1 through to grade 5.

By motivating and mobilizing mothers in the community, SAHE has been able to increase enrollment in the schools considerably. Initially the communities were very conservative and there was a level of resistance to women's involvement when SAHE attempted to mobilize mothers to send their children, especially daughters, to these schools. However, after trust had been established, these women became active participants in the

whole educational process. Often daughters would go home and share their newly acquired knowledge with

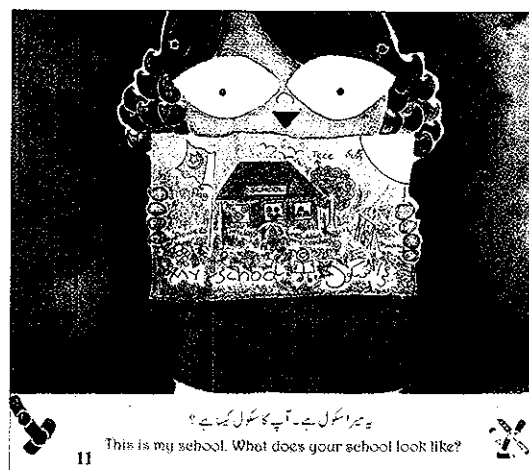
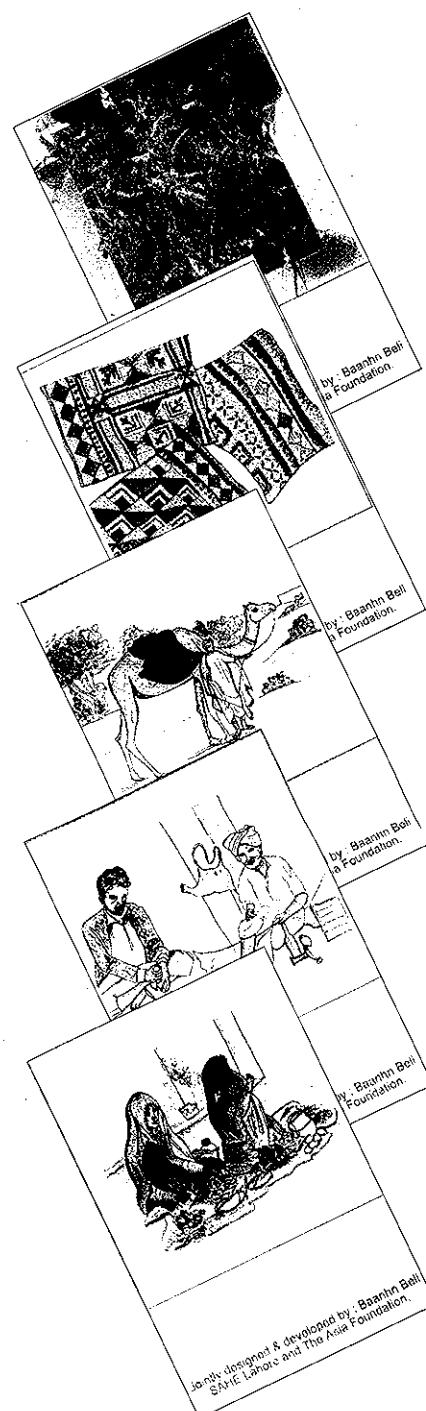
t h e i r
mothers. This has led to a general feeling of women's empowerment and an improvement in their status within the communities

where SAHE has schools.

Curriculum development and teacher training are essential building blocks in any nation's educational strategy. The role of SAHE's broad-based primary educational curriculum is manifold. SAHE hopes to impart literacy, to instill a healthy curiosity, to give tools to ensure opportunities for a better quality of life, and finally to influence a moral value system pertaining to human rights, gender equality, health, and a respect for the environment. "To be effective, we had to translate these ideas into tangible teaching methods in a fun, activity based way."

"We have always believed in community participation. Sustainability is not merely a financial issue. Human resources and systems have to be sustained as well. In order to make these schools sustainable in the future, there has to be a sense of community ownership. With this aim in mind, each school has a village education committee responsible for collecting a token fee from each of the students monthly."

-Dr. Fareeha Zafar, SAHE



Strengthening Participatory Organizations

Communities Take Charge

The mission of SPO is clearly defined in their name: Strengthening Participatory Organizations. Their aim as an NGO is to strengthen both rural and urban community based organizations (CBOs) to assist the poorer and disadvantaged sections of the communities to achieve their own goals by using a participatory approach to sustainable development.

Since the needs of development in Pakistan are manifold, SPO aims to assist community participation and encourage local grassroots organizations to understand their needs and facilitate communities to act on these findings. SPO does not target any particular sector of development, but instead supports various different CBOs to achieve their aims, through training and capacity building. Whichever route they may take, the ultimate aim of each of these CBOs is to help Pakistan sustainably develop into a strong and vibrant nation.

Although SPO was formally

established as an NGO in 1994, their history goes back to 1987. Ali Akbar, their Chief Executive, has been with SPO since its inception, aiding and steering its growth. "We have been able to establish a strong regional presence," he says. With offices and representation in the cities and remote reaches of all four provinces, SPO today operates a training and capacity building service that interacts closely with over 760 CBOs. Of the 760 CBOs about a third are female organizations. In terms of sheer scale SPO is a unique organization. It is a testament to their commitment and success that so many community based organizations have chosen to partner



with SPO.

The multi-pronged and continuing relationship between The Asia Foundation and SPO began shortly after its formal inception in early 1994. "TAF provided strategic support for a women's empowerment program that we ran. Male organizations in the Frontier

[NWFP] did not actively involve women, so this was a pilot project for establishing parallel female organizations."

Another area of support was non-formal education. "Since we had had a productive and good working



relationship with The Asia Foundation, we turned to them for help when we needed funding to reactivate thirty community schools in Noshera. Our original donors UNICEF pulled out of the program mid-stream due to some of their own internal policy changes. Had TAF not stepped in and provided bridge financing at

that crucial time, the entire program may have collapsed."

By extending the original 18-month program to two years, TAF

successfully funded a project that directly impacted the lives of over one thousand male and female primary school students. Had these primary schools not been reactivated, none

of these children would have had access to any form of education.

TAF stepped in a third time to support an integrated female non-formal literacy program in Turbat, Balochistan. Women and girls would come together to learn basic literacy, acquire skills, and understand how to approach micro-credit organizations with feasible initiatives. "TAF have been close and valuable friends to SPO. We feel that whenever we have a problem or concerns, we can knock at their door. It is a vibrant and positive relationship, despite the financial and programmatic constraints."

"Our work is not sectorally focused. Our ultimate aim is capacity building, but we try to understand the communities' own needs, rather than foist our own pre-conceived ideas upon them. By involving the communities in a participatory approach, we feel that we can achieve much more."

- Ali Akbar, SPO

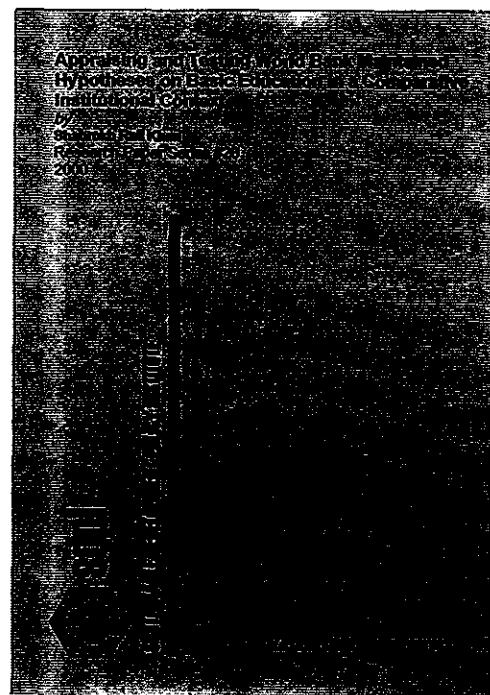
The Sustainable Development Policy Institute

Policy Reforms Based on Grassroots Experiences

The Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) is an independent public interest think-tank and a nexus for advocacy. Shahruxh Rafi Khan, Executive Director of SDPI says of their mission, "We have a vision to catalyze the transition towards sustainable human development. This can broadly be defined as the enhancement of peace, social justice, and well-being within and across generations." The focus of SDPI is the implementation of Pakistan's National Conservation Strategy (NCS). SDPI was formed in 1992 as a result of a two-year design process with the NCS, but has since broadened its mandate with a focus on vulnerable sectors of society.

The Asia Foundation under PNI has shared a common vision with SDPI on uplifting conditions for the underprivileged through universalizing basic education. Impressed by the quality of research material produced by SDPI, TAF engaged SDPI and the London School of Economics (LSE) in a tripartite project partnership to study

the state of universal basic education in Pakistan. TAF helped SDPI to forge a link between local researchers and expatriates interested in basic education. "This helped us to focus on basic education issues with a different approach." This partnership has resulted in eight working papers and two major reports highlighting areas of governmental failure and positive suggestions for the future. The SDPI / LSE researchers studied public interventions and private responses in comparative educational institutions from the NGO, private, non-formal, and government sectors. The studies specifically analyzed the political, economic, and social forces



that constrain the delivery of basic, universal education in Pakistan.

SDPI/TAF have also joined hands organizing a policy workshop for education implementers, highlighting their perspective in a "digestible manner" says Shahrukh Rafi Khan. "We focus at working on various different levels: writing

"We look at investments in people, especially the vulnerable sectors of society. Education, health, water, gender, environment, land degradation, deforestation, and mass migrations into overcrowded urban centers are all issues that affect the most vulnerable: that is the socially excluded; poor and females. The poor need to have incentives and develop tools to protect themselves."

- Shahrukh Rafi Khan, SDPI

decisions of policy makers to be based on research evidence and analysis."

TAF and SDPI both have an interest in strengthening democracy and studying governance issues. TAF joined hands with SDPI/LSE as research partners. When the National Reconstruction

Bureau (NRB) began drawing up a framework for the devolution of power to the grassroots level, with TAF funding, SDPI/LSE wrote an in-depth policy paper on the subject, outlining some of the fundamental prerequisites. The study outlined land reform for catalyzing different leadership in a fundamental sense. It advised the use of local knowledge for local action: the devolving of power, and empowering the



articles; policy work, empirical research, and report writing. These accumulated findings will all be published in a book format. Aiming at a wider public discourse, this tripartite relationship between TAF/SDPI/LSE aims at assisting the



Universalizing Basic Education

grassroots with the responsibilities of accountability and authority. "We tried to help the NRB frame the rules of business. Although they drew on our model regarding some of the conceptual issues, we were disappointed in their inability to enforce many of the vital suggestions because of their own political constraints," says Shahrukh Rafi Khan.

Through a healthy academia, through research and study, through discourse and debate, a nation can evolve strategies for growth and improvement. Learning from past mistakes and planning strategically for the future requires conscious reflection and an empirical understanding of the key issues involved: economics, development, and governance, among others.



Teacher's Resource Centre

Initiating Change through Professional Development

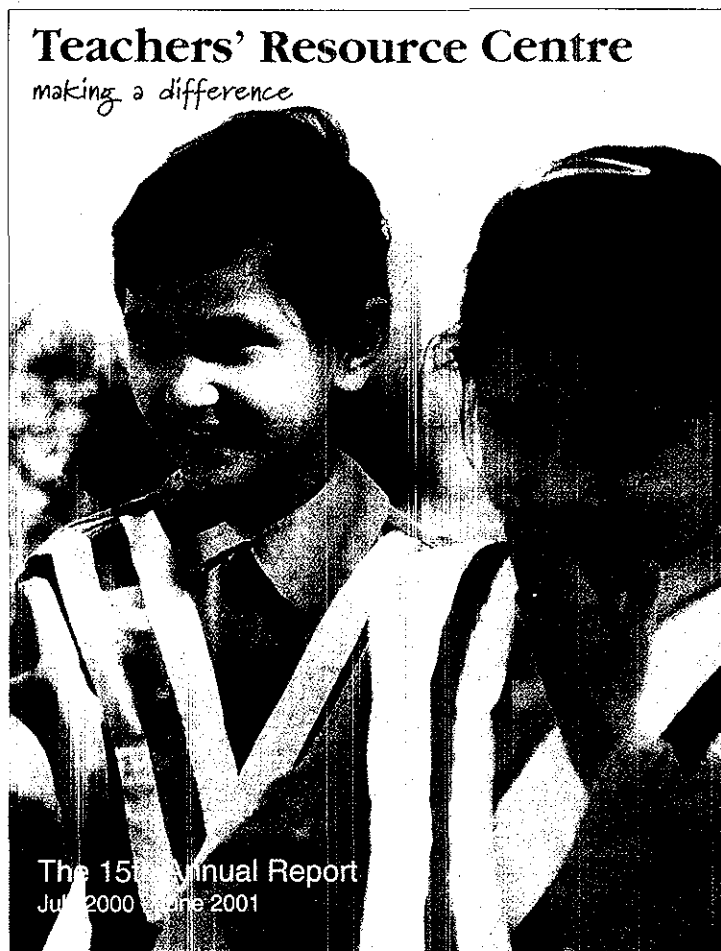
In 1986 a group of Karachi based private school teachers formed the Teacher's Resource Centre (TRC). "We wanted to bridge the gap

information, and expertise. We were tired of laying blame and wanted to make a positive contribution in our own way," says Mahenaz Mahmud, senior programme manager.

Seema Malik, founding member and director of TRC ran the first workshop in her own home. Their initial vision was to work within public sector schools, and they ran a program called "Initiating Change through Professional Development." Even though their focus remains on improving the conditions in underprivileged government schools, TRC still partners with private schools. These are osmotic partnerships with a two-way flow of information, practice, and methodology. The prime focus of TRC is teacher training.

In addition, tools and methods are not forcibly foisted upon teachers. TRC wants them to choose to implement these new tools and methods because they recognize them to be more progress-inducing and efficient.

Supported by The Asia



Foundation, the best communicators among these teachers are given further training on leadership. Through an Outreach and Impact Assessment report on Leaders Training, it has been discovered that

these newly empowered leader/teachers can in turn impact dozens of other teachers when they articulate messages and share the tools that they have learned. After these intensive workshops, teachers have commented on the changes in their students and in the classroom environment. They say that the students are more motivated and inspired, are more

curious and responsive, and more eager and less inhibited. The classroom becomes a friendlier place, being more interactive and dynamic in nature. As a follow up to the workshops, TRC publishes a quarterly newsletter in Urdu and English to keep teachers motivated, involved, and abreast of new developments and methodologies.

"We as a nation should not keep on blaming teachers. They are just products of the same cycle of failure. They need to be given an alternative, a show of support, and shown direction. When they come to TRC workshops they begin to feel good about themselves. They feel valued and recognize that they have a vital role. They learn new methods and talk about education in an inspiring and uplifting way. For some of them, it is the first time that they feel a sense of professional fraternity with other teachers. These workshops are empowering. We show the teachers that they have a voice, and that their opinions matter. It is only when they feel positive about themselves, that they can impart a positive influence on the children they teach."

-Seema Malik, TRC

TRC works with the government on a policy level to "tentatively develop a national curriculum guideline. We want to work within the constraints and produce an active learning syllabus." Early childhood

education at a pre-primary level has been recognized as absolutely critical to the development of a child. To aid the educational process in these *kachi* classes, TRC has developed the *Pehla Taleemi Basta*, (First Educational Kit) a ready-made kit for primary teachers. The bag is equipped with pockets containing relevant course material, and has been a success with the 41 urban schools that have

partnered with TRC, as well as non-partner schools.

With the expansion of their vision, visibility, and programs, TRC saw the need to assess their capacity to meet new demands. "By the mid 1990s TRC needed to start looking at building its own internal systems, and a key element of this was fundraising. The Asia Foundation

has been an immense support to us in this endeavor. Normally, we at TRC have had to seek partnerships with potential donors. Unusually The Asia Foundation approached us. They visited us and wanted to find out what work we do."

Through these meetings, a partnership was formed and TRC put together a proposal. TAF wanted to look into the areas of impact assessment, monitoring, and evaluation to build up TRC systems and establish a positive future direction. "TAF has been very positive and responsive to our needs. They have never tried to push their own agenda." Seema Malik says "TAF had the vision to support TRC at a time of growth and expansion. The consultancies for monitoring and evaluation supported by TAF have been most useful. TRC has moved forward in great strides as a result. Several in-house accountability procedures for meeting targets and sustaining systems are in place." It has been a mutually beneficial partnership: one that has been a learning curve and an agent for growth.

Cover Photograph by: Mehnaz Akber Aziz
Setting: Community School, Tharparker



The Asia Foundation

A Partner in Asia Since 1954

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